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For:

- ✓ School council
- ✓ Principal and school leaders
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ Canteen staff
- Students
- ✓ School community

'Go for your life'

# Healthy Canteen Kit

School canteens and other  
school food services

# policy



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## Contents

<b>Introduction to the <i>School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What is a healthy school food service?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Whole-school approach to healthy eating</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What foods should be provided in healthy school food services?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Categories of foods</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Special dietary requirements</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Developing healthy school food services</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A school canteen/food service policy</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The school canteen as a viable operation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Food safety</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The role of the school council</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>16</b>

## **› Introduction to the *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy***

School canteens and other school food services are important educational resources. They have an important role in the provision of food to students and the school community as well as being an integral part of the school environment.

The school canteen should reflect the educational goals of the school and support and complement student learning. When consumed daily, the food provided through the school canteen may comprise a third of a student's total daily intake and have a significant influence on their health and nutrition.

It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to support a whole-school approach to building a school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle.

The '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit* contains the following resources to assist schools to develop healthy canteens and other food services:

- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit – School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy* explains the guiding principles, including food selection, food categories, food safety, and the role of the school council in developing a school food service policy.
- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner* assists schools and canteens to make appropriate healthy food choices.
- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Getting Started* provides advice about how to establish a healthy school food service. It includes healthy fundraising ideas, frequently asked questions and a sample canteen policy.
- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Student Learning Activities* provides a suite of learning activities for each of the six levels of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) for Years Prep to 10.
- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Canteen Manual* provides practical information for canteen managers and school personnel to assist with the management and day-to-day running of the school canteen.
- '*Go for your life*' *Healthy Canteen Kit* CD-ROM provides an electronic copy of the entire kit.
- *At a glance planner* provides a quick reference in poster form to assist with healthy food choices.
- A poster to promote healthy food choices to students.

The *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy* provides advice to schools about:

- what constitutes healthy school food services
- the importance of a whole-school approach to healthy eating
- foods to provide through school food services
- how to develop healthy school food services
- the importance of developing a school food service policy
- hints for making a healthy school canteen viable
- food safety
- the role of the school council in operating a school canteen or sub-leasing to a private contractor
- a list of useful resources and web links.

The *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy* applies to food services within the school environment, for example school events such as celebrations and sports days, vending machines and foods used in curriculum activities.

Many school councils have contractual arrangements in relation to their canteens and while these arrangements need to be honoured, councils should discuss with licensees ways in which canteens can become compliant with Department Policy. Schools that have a specific relationship with a retail shop, for example a local milk bar, for the provision of school foods and drinks also need to consider how the Policy can be applied.

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## What is a healthy school food service?

A healthy school food service:

- makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- offers a variety of nutritious foods
- promotes foods that are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*
- can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
- involves students, parents and the wider school community
- is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment.



## › Whole-school approach to healthy eating

The school's food services and curriculum programs on healthy eating should be complementary. Positive peer pressure within the education setting can create a culture in which nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle are actively chosen. This culture should permeate the entire school environment and can have an impact on choices made by students about food consumption when they are not at school.

A positive attitude towards a school canteen that supports healthy eating should be promoted and endorsed. This is facilitated through a whole-school approach to nutrition.

The World Health Organization encourages schools to take a health promoting schools approach to support healthy eating.

The Health Promoting Schools framework provides a useful model for schools to promote and protect the health of students. The framework highlights the importance of the relationships between:

- curriculum, teaching and learning
- school organisation, ethos and environment
- community links and partnerships.

***A health-promoting school is a place where all members of the school community work together to provide students with integrated and positive experiences and structures that promote and protect their health.***  
World Health Organization, 1996

Further information can be accessed from the Health Promoting Schools website at: [www.ahpsa.org.au](http://www.ahpsa.org.au).

Examples of healthy food-related actions are:

### **1 Curriculum, teaching and learning:**

- developing curriculum that supports healthy food choices
- encouraging students to become involved in food-related activities, for example planning meals, growing foods, shopping for food products, cooking and promoting foods.

### **2 School organisation, ethos and environment:**

- offering a variety of nutritious foods at the school food service and regularly changing the menu
- being creative with presentation and preparation of healthy foods
- maintaining consistent messages about healthy foods in all parts of the school operation.

### **3 Community links and partnerships:**

- making links with local fruit and vegetable retailers – this could include a school visit by the retailers, or an excursion to a local market
- supporting an enthusiastic group of people to serve the food to students.

Practical ideas for marketing and promoting healthier food choices are available from the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – *Canteen Manual*.

Curriculum activities to support a whole school approach to healthy eating are available from the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – *Student Learning Activities*.



## › What foods should be provided in healthy school food services?

### Guiding principles for food selection

A healthy school food service should provide foods that reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (National Health and Medical Research Council 2003). These dietary guidelines are outlined in more detail in the 'Go for your life' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner*.

In summary, the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* encourages students to:

- enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods
- eat plenty of vegetables, legumes, fruits, breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- include milk, yoghurt, cheese
- choose water as a drink
- limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake
- choose foods low in salt
- consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.

Another useful resource for schools is the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, which encourages Australians to eat a range of foods from each of the five food groups: breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles; vegetables, legumes; fruit; milk, yoghurt, cheese; and meat and meat alternatives.

The following principles should inform the selection of foods sold in school food services:

- a range of foods from each of the five food groups outlined in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* are included
- fresh rather than processed food is provided
- a range of portion sizes that cater for varying energy use and developmental requirements are offered
- foods offered reflect the multicultural diversity of the school community.

The food items provided in a school food service will depend on variables such as:

- cost and availability
- needs and backgrounds of the students
- season and temperature
- the school's food preparation and storage facilities
- the size of the school
- the number of people involved in the school food service.

## › Categories of foods

The 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner can assist in selecting foods and drinks for school canteens and other food-related school activities.

The planner divides foods and drinks into three categories.

### Everyday category (green foods)

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* and are most suitable for school food services.

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are based on the basic food groups and include:

- breads and cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
- vegetables
- fruits
- dairy foods – reduced or low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts\* and legumes (dried beans and lentils)
- water.

Schools should:

- encourage and promote these foods
- provide a wide range of these foods every day
- take every opportunity to include foods in this group as the main choices on the canteen menu
- promote these foods as tasty, fresh and good value choices
- present these foods in attractive and interesting ways
- include as the main choices at school events and activities involving foods.



\* Food allergies are the most common triggers for anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions) in children. Eight foods cause 90 per cent of food allergies: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soybean, tree nuts (for example, cashew), fish and shellfish. Schools should be aware of the risk of hidden allergens. Check your school's policy regarding students with severe allergies.

## Select Carefully category (amber foods)

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category contain some valuable nutrients, but may also include unhealthy ingredients. They are mainly processed foods that have fat, sugar or salt added.

Schools are encouraged to limit the availability of these foods. They should not be promoted at the expense of foods and drinks from the Everyday category.

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category include:

- full-fat dairy foods, low-fat ice-cream
- 100 per cent fruit juices and 100 per cent fruit-juice based ices
- artificially sweetened drinks
- reduced-fat processed meats
- commercially prepared hot foods
- reduced-fat, high-fibre snack foods
- margarines, oils, spreads, sauces and gravies.



## Occasionally category (red foods)

Foods and drinks in the Occasionally category are not consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* and are not recommended for school food services.

**Schools should limit the availability of these foods and drinks to no more than two occasions per term.**

Foods and drinks in this category are defined in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* as 'extra foods' and include:

- sugar-sweetened drinks – sports drinks, cordial, fruit-flavoured drinks
- deep-fried foods
- pastry-based or crumbed hot foods
- savoury snack foods – crisps, chips, biscuits
- ice-creams and ice confections – chocolate-coated and premium ice-creams, icy-poles and ice crushes
- cakes, muffins, sweet pastries, slices, biscuits and bars.



**From 2007, high sugar content soft drinks should not be supplied through school food services. This includes energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters with high sugar content.**

**Confectionery is of minimal nutritional value. For this reason the sale of confectionery through school food services will be phased out from 2007–2009.**

**From 2009, no confectionery should be supplied through school food services.**

For an explanation of these categories as well as a detailed list of food and drink items that fit into each of the categories refer to the *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner*.



## › Special dietary requirements

Some students may require special diets for medical reasons. The school food service should try to meet these needs as far as possible so that all children can enjoy eating a healthy lunch from the canteen. Any special needs for children with disabilities such as modified texture diets or wheelchair access to the canteen should also be considered. The school principal, child's teacher or parents should provide advice of any special dietary needs to canteen staff.

Medical conditions that have special dietary requirements include:

- diabetes
- coeliac disease
- anaphylaxis.

### **Anaphylactic (severe) food allergy (peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soy bean, tree nuts, fish and shellfish)**

Contact with certain foods can be fatal for people with allergies to these foods. The most common triggers of anaphylaxis are: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soy bean, tree nuts (for example, cashews), fish and shellfish.

The Department of Education and Training has guidelines for schools to support students with anaphylaxis. For more information, go to: [www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/anaphyl.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/anaphyl.htm).

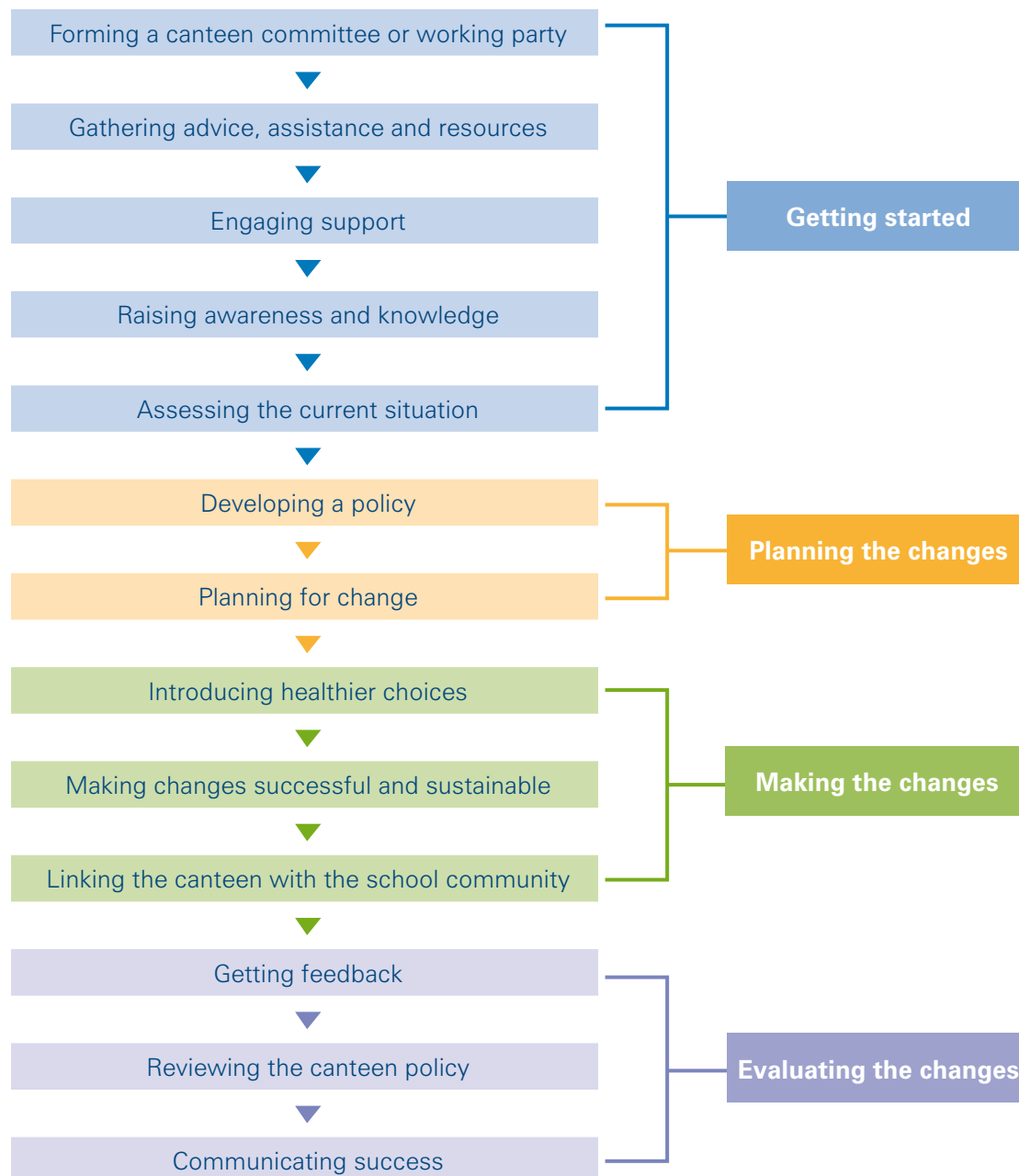
Canteen staff need to be aware of students with such allergies and familiar with the school's management strategies for these students.

More information about special dietary requirements is contained in the 'Go for your life' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Canteen Manual*.



## › Developing healthy school food services

The following process can assist a school in providing healthy school food services.



For a more detailed outline of the steps to support a school council to move towards a healthy food service refer to the *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Getting Started*.

## › A school canteen/food service policy

### The importance of developing a policy

A school canteen/food service policy will ensure the sustainability of the healthy changes made to the school food services by providing a school document that supports the change.

The policy communicates a consistent message to the whole school community and gives direction and support to the canteen staff. By defining the role and activities of the canteen and other school food services it sets goals and guides its operation and management.

The policy reflects the values of the school community and clarifies what the community expects from the canteen and other school food services.

The policy could include:

- background statement or rationale
- aims
- operation
- nutrition information about foods to be offered
- strategies for promoting and marketing healthy choices
- roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers
- food safety and hygiene and occupational health and safety guidelines and procedures
- canteen management
  - canteen staff (including roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers)
  - volunteers (including procedures for orientation and support strategies for reward and recognition)
  - staff training
- financial management
  - pricing and income issues
  - financial and stock management
  - accounting and reporting responsibilities
  - canteen equipment
- links to the school's curriculum and community
- evaluation, review and monitoring of processes.

The 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – *Getting Started* contains a draft school food service policy that may assist a school to formulate its own policy.

## › The school canteen as a viable operation

School canteens need to be viable and this viability can be evaluated using a number of measures. These may include student support, numbers of canteen workers and income.

Funds from the operations of a school canteen is often a significant source of revenue for a school. Consequently, it is important that the nutritious food items are attractive to students and are offered at an affordable price. There is often a misconception that healthier foods are more expensive.

Students and their families need to be involved in the process of supporting healthy school food services. Strategies to involve them include:

- using the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) as a basis for curriculum planning and appropriate classroom activities to support canteen changes
- educating and informing parents through articles in the school newsletter, announcements at school assemblies and community activities
- involving parents and students in decisions about menu items and healthy fundraising
- advertising canteen prices on notice-boards and sending price lists home
- encouraging parents to volunteer their services for the school canteen.





## › Food safety

Current requirements specify that all registered food premises, including schools, must demonstrate that the food prepared and served is safe to eat in accordance with the Victorian *Food Act 1984* and the subsequent *Food Amendment Act 1997* and the *Food Amendment Act 2001*.

School food services are regarded as Class 2 food premises. Class 2 food premises must prepare a food safety program. This is usually based on a Department of Human Services (DHS) approved template. A template, 'Food Safety Program Template for Retail and Food Service Businesses', can be downloaded from the Food Safety Victoria website at [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety). Food safety programs can also be completed online at [www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au](http://www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au).

An important part of the food safety program is the appointment of a food safety supervisor. This person has the authority to ensure that all food handlers who work (paid or as a volunteer) in the establishment have the appropriate food safety and hygiene skills and knowledge. To be deemed competent as a food safety supervisor the completion of units of competency from an appropriate training provider is required. Details of these can also be found on the Food Safety Victoria website.

Food safety and handling requirements cover personal hygiene practices, food preparation practices, food storage and cleaning procedures.

### **Personal hygiene requirements include:**

- washing and drying hands before handling food and frequently during work
- not smoking near food
- not going to work when sick with a gastric disorder or contagious disease
- using a handkerchief or tissue when coughing or sneezing.

### **Food preparation requirements include:**

- ensuring that food is handled by either a gloved hand or by utensils
- ensuring that benches are clean
- ensuring that there are suitable areas for food preparation (animals are forbidden in these areas)
- avoiding cross-contamination of cooked and raw foods – hands or utensils that have been used to prepare raw foods must be washed properly before they are used to prepare ready-to-eat or cooked foods.



#### **Food storage requirements involve:**

- ensuring that cold food is stored below 5°C
- ensuring that frozen food is stored below minus 15°C
- ensuring that hot food is maintained at over 60°C
- minimising the time that food is kept in the danger zone, that is between 5°C and 60°C – the temperature range at which bacteria are most likely to grow
- ensuring that when cooling hot, potentially hazardous food it is cooled within two hours from 60°C to 21°C and within a further four hours to 5°C

#### **Cleaning requirements involve:**

- ensuring that there is a display of schedules outlining how the premises are cleaned
- having procedures for the storage and disposal of garbage and the location of bins.

For more information see section 4.4.6.11 of the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

Further information can also be obtained from [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety) or the Food Safety Victoria Hotline on 1300 364 352.

## › **The role of the school council**

The school council has the authority through the *Education Act 1958* to operate a school canteen. This authority can be delegated to a club or association that is not a subcommittee of the school council or sub-leased to a private contractor under a licence. This licence is obtained from the Department of Education.

If a school canteen is sub-leased to a private contractor, the school council should ensure that the contract specifies that food to be sold reflects the 'Go for your life' *Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner*.

The operation (stores, stocktaking, trading/profit/loss statements, etc.) of school canteens and other school food services must be consistent with the information provided in section 7.17 of the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

The school council has an important role to play in making decisions about the education, health and wellbeing of the school's students. It is recommended that the school council develops a policy for its canteen and other school food services that supports this role. This policy-making process should include a discussion about the purpose of the school canteen within the school community.

## > Resources

*Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*  
(National Health and Medical Research Council 2003)

**[www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/\\_files/n30.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/_files/n30.pdf)**

*Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*

**[www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/food/guide/whatis.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/food/guide/whatis.htm)**

Dietitians Association of Australia  
Accredited Practising Dietitian Hotline on 1800 812 942

**[www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)**

Food Safety Victoria Hotline  
Telephone 1300 364 352

**[www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety)**

*'Go for your life'*

**[www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au)**

Health Promoting Schools

**[www.ahpsa.org.au](http://www.ahpsa.org.au)**

National Heart Foundation of Australia  
Telephone 1300 362 787

**[www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)**

Nutrition Australia – Nutrition in Schools Advisory Service

**[www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)**

Public Health Nutrition Information – Department of Human Services  
Telephone (03) 9637 4047 or (03) 9637 4029

**[www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition)**

Victorian Home Economics and Textiles Teachers' Association  
Telephone (03) 9888 2240

**[www.vhetta.com.au](http://www.vhetta.com.au)**

Australian School Canteen Association (ASCA)  
PO Box 1496 Collingwood VIC 3066  
Telephone 1800 219 556  
Email: [office@asca.com.au](mailto:office@asca.com.au)

**[www.asca.com.au](http://www.asca.com.au)**

The Victorian School Canteen Association  
VSCA PO Box 5144 West Heidelberg VIC 3081  
Telephone (03) 9890 4203 Facsimile (03) 9890 1601  
Free call (Victorian country schools) 1800 803 762  
Email: [info@vsca.org.au](mailto:info@vsca.org.au)

**[www.vsca.org.au](http://www.vsca.org.au)**

## Other state and territory education department resources

New South Wales – *Canteen Menu Planning Guide*

[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/cmpg\\_ck.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/cmpg_ck.php)

Queensland – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools

[www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy.html](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy.html)

South Australia – Centre for Health Promotion

[www.chdf.org.au](http://www.chdf.org.au)

Tasmania – *Tasmanian School Canteen Handbook*

[www.discover.tased.edu.au/hpe/cmh/Default.htm](http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/hpe/cmh/Default.htm)

ACT – Health Promoting Schools

[activated.det.act.gov.au/hps/resources/foodnutrition.htm#schoolcanteen](http://activated.det.act.gov.au/hps/resources/foodnutrition.htm#schoolcanteen)

Western Australia – Western Australian Association School Canteen Association Inc.

[www.waschoolcanteens.org.au](http://www.waschoolcanteens.org.au)

South Australian Health Promoting Schools Network

[www.sahps.net](http://www.sahps.net)

